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## **Environment Department Officials Aid Pecos on Wastewater Issues**

(Santa Fe, NM) — Several New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) officials traveled to the Village of Pecos Friday and met with community leaders there in an attempt to find a solution to the village's wastewater problems. NMED has pledged to work with the community to help solve their problems. Possible solutions include technical assistance, funding grants and loans to improve the village's faulty wastewater plant.

In recent years the village's wastewater treatment plant has fallen out of compliance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effluent guidelines. Most recently the EPA issued the village an Administrative Order in May listing 99 effluent violations, including fecal coliform levels far above national standards.

"To protect the health of the citizens of Pecos and the Pecos River as well as to allow for growth in the Pecos Valley, NMED is going to explore all of our options and act as quickly as possible," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "Aiding rural villages like Pecos is a top priority of this Department."

In addition to exploring technical and funding options to facilitate wastewater improvements, Charles Lundstrom, Director of NMED's Water and Waste Management Division will represent the Department at an enforcement meeting between the village and EPA in Dallas next week.

"This problem has gone on too long," said Lundstrom. "Now that the new administration is on top of it we are going to find both short and long term solutions for the Village of Pecos and the entire Pecos valley."

Short-term solutions being explored include a recirculating pump to send sewage through the plant twice and a moratorium on new sewer hookups in the village. Measures such as these will help alleviate the problem while the village secures funding for and constructs a new system.

"Pecos is rich in land but poor in money," said Mayor Tony Roybal. "The assistance that the Environment Department is giving is a good thing for this community. We need the help and I appreciate the support."

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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